

Removing Barriers to International Students' Adjustment & Wellness

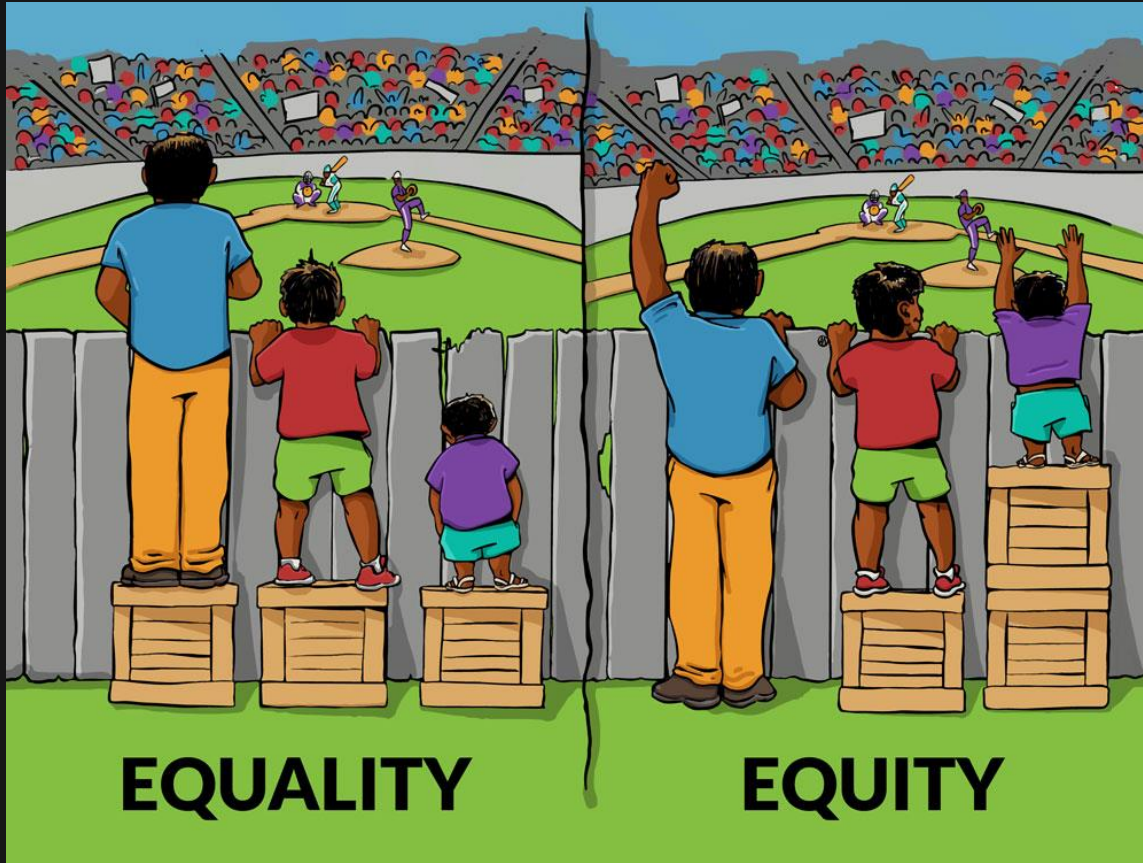
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CAPS

Counseling and Psychological Services
UC SAN DIEGO

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Core
Competencies

Five Core Competencies

- #1 Welcome the stranger (#political climate)
- #2 See the richness behind the limitations (#language)
- #3 Give, one step at a time (#information overload)
- #4 Honor the differences (#values)
- #5 Student before task (#counseling skills)

#1 Welcome the Stranger

xen · o · pho · bi · a

/ ˌzɛnə ˈfɒbiə , ˌzēnə ˈfɒbiə /

noun

intense or irrational dislike
or fear of people from other
countries

Law Enforcement Approach



- Fearful officers interpret unexpected behaviors as malicious
- Unleashing and legitimizing xenophobic unwelcoming attitudes

Under Current Administration

- Visa delays and denials – barriers to enter the US & maintain legal status
- New ways to punish students who violate the conditions of their visas — even if inadvertently
- Intense scrutiny over permit programs for getting work in the US after graduation
- Overall, official anti-immigrant rhetoric, which makes the US less attractive for students

Example of Harsher Regulations

- Must maintain Full Time Academic Enrollment - 12 units per quarter
- If dropping below 12 units without a formal process → loss of immigration status → requires 'reinstatement'
- Under current Administration, reinstatement often not approved → student must go home
- Academic or non-academic misconduct → suspended from school → loss of immigration status
- Left the US after suspension → most likely status not renewed given record of suspension

- **International students must stay on top of regulations, plan carefully, and have little flexibility**
- **May be forced to sacrifice grades to meet the 12-unit requirement**

Impact

Changing attitudes about studying in the US

One-third of 2,104 international students considering college in the US for 2017 or 2018 said their interest decreased in light of the political climate, in a February 2017 survey of students from 150 countries. Their reasons:

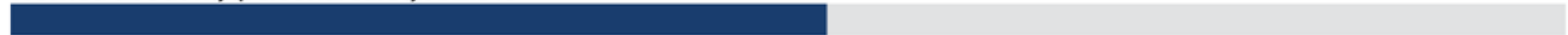
Concerns about the US presidential administration: **68.9%**



Worried about travel restrictions for international students: **54.6%**



Worried about my personal safety: **52.5%**



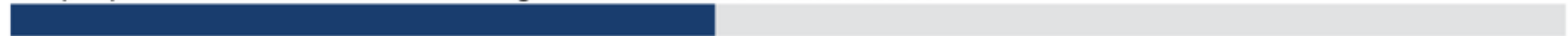
It is too expensive to study in the US: **50.2%**



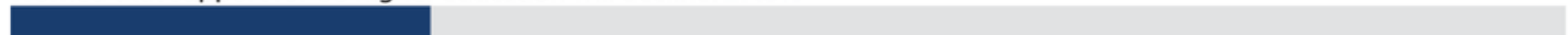
Prejudice and/or discrimination against people from my country: **48.0%**



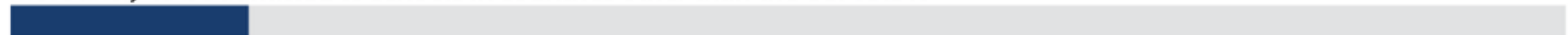
The people of the US seem less welcoming to international students: **45.3%**



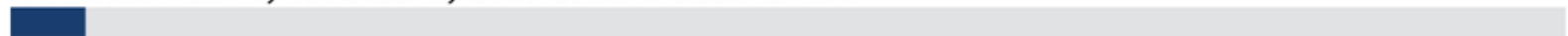
Worried that support for US higher education will decline: **27.0%**



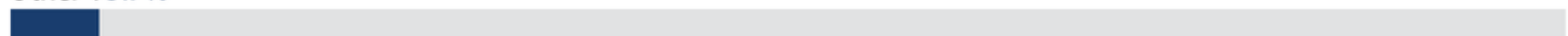
More likely to be admitted to schools in countries other than the US: **15.3%**



The climate within my home country is now better for students: **4.8%**



Other*: **5.7%**



*Other responses: increased discrimination, increased volatility/unsafe conditions/protests, financial considerations, job prospects, liberal tendencies on campuses, censorship, situation in own country, fear of deportation, Trump, moving away from parents, and decline in quality of education in US

#1 Welcome the Stranger

1. Appreciate subjective experience given political climate
2. Remember the great benefits of making this Campus an inclusive, globally-engaged environment
3. Emphasize that you are a student-advocate and not a long arm of the law

#2 See the Richness Behind
the Limitations

- Low correlation between TOEFL score and academic success or ability to communicate in a real world setting
- Language in social settings goes beyond surface meanings of words
- Good vocabulary does not guarantee understanding context, cultural assumptions, or body language

(e.g., Cho, & Bridgeman, 2012, Lang. Test., 29 (3), pp. 421-442)

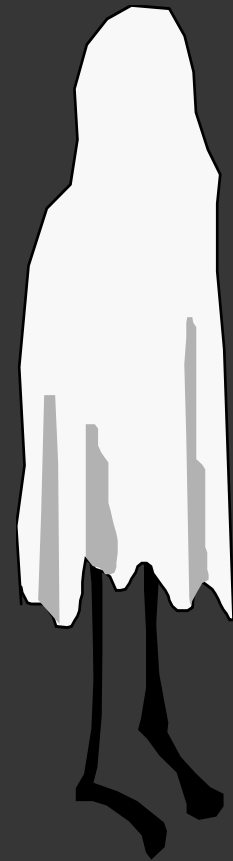
Language difficulties → academic difficulties

Language difficulties → social difficulties

Language difficulties → barriers to using campus
resources effectively

First Hand Experience: Language & Accent

- Not understanding
- Not being understood
- Feeling less intelligent
- Drop in performance
- Impact on self-esteem
- Impact on social behavior
- Exacerbated when tired or stressed



What Do Americans Mean When They Say...?

“How are you doing?”

“How was your weekend?”

“Let’s get lunch some time...”

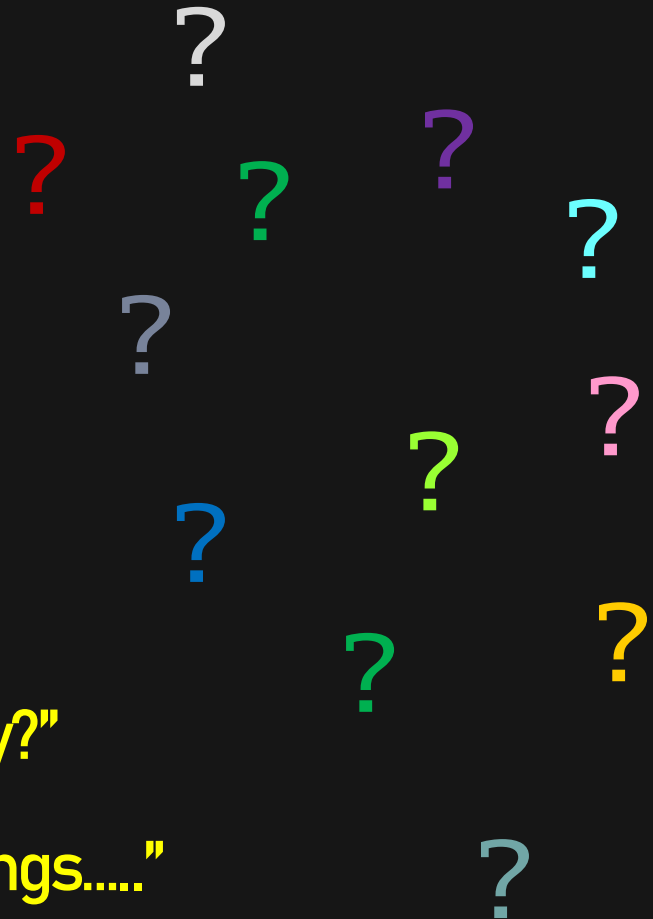
“See you soon!”

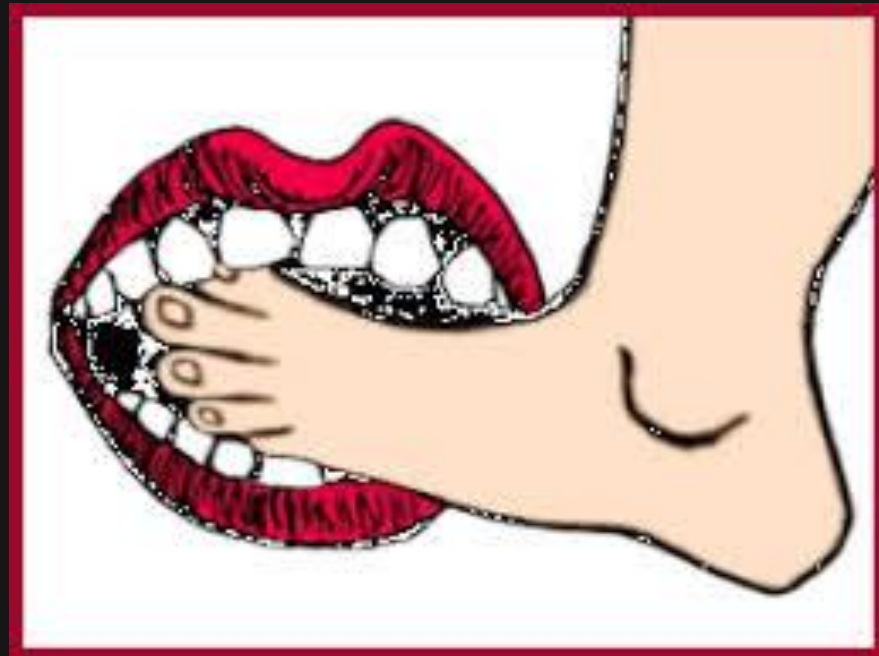
“I will see you around”

“Any special plans for your birthday?”

“I really like your shirt, shoes, earrings.....”

“Love ya... miss ya...”





"Do you know what a foreign accent is? It's a sign of bravery."

(Amy Chua)

"You are as many a person as languages you know."

(Armenian Proverbs)

#2 See the Richness Behind the Limitations

- Limit use of acronyms, abbrev., jargon, & idioms
- Check for understanding
- Use feedback loops
- Be patient
- Tip sheet for intercultural communication

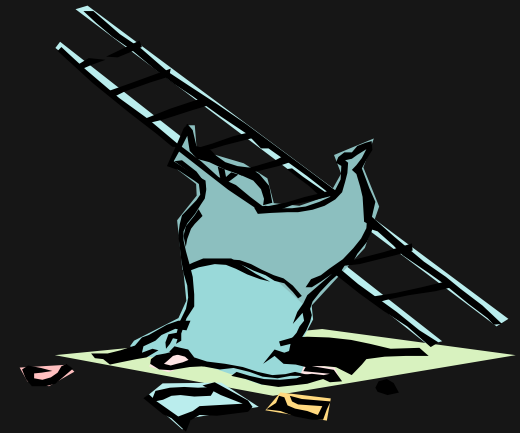
#3 Give, One Step at a Time

- Information overload → overwhelm, anxiety
- Difficulty understanding & communicating → mental exhaustion
- With depression and anxiety → more difficulty in mental processing

* Cognitive fatigue

* Mental exhaustion

* Depression



#3 Give, One Step at a Time

- Help students slow down, and take one step at a time
- Untangle complexities
- Write things down for later reference
- Help them prioritize when multiple tasks are in order
- Reassure them that things will become easier with time

#4 Honor the Differences

“Work ethics”

Communication style

Educational system

Gender roles

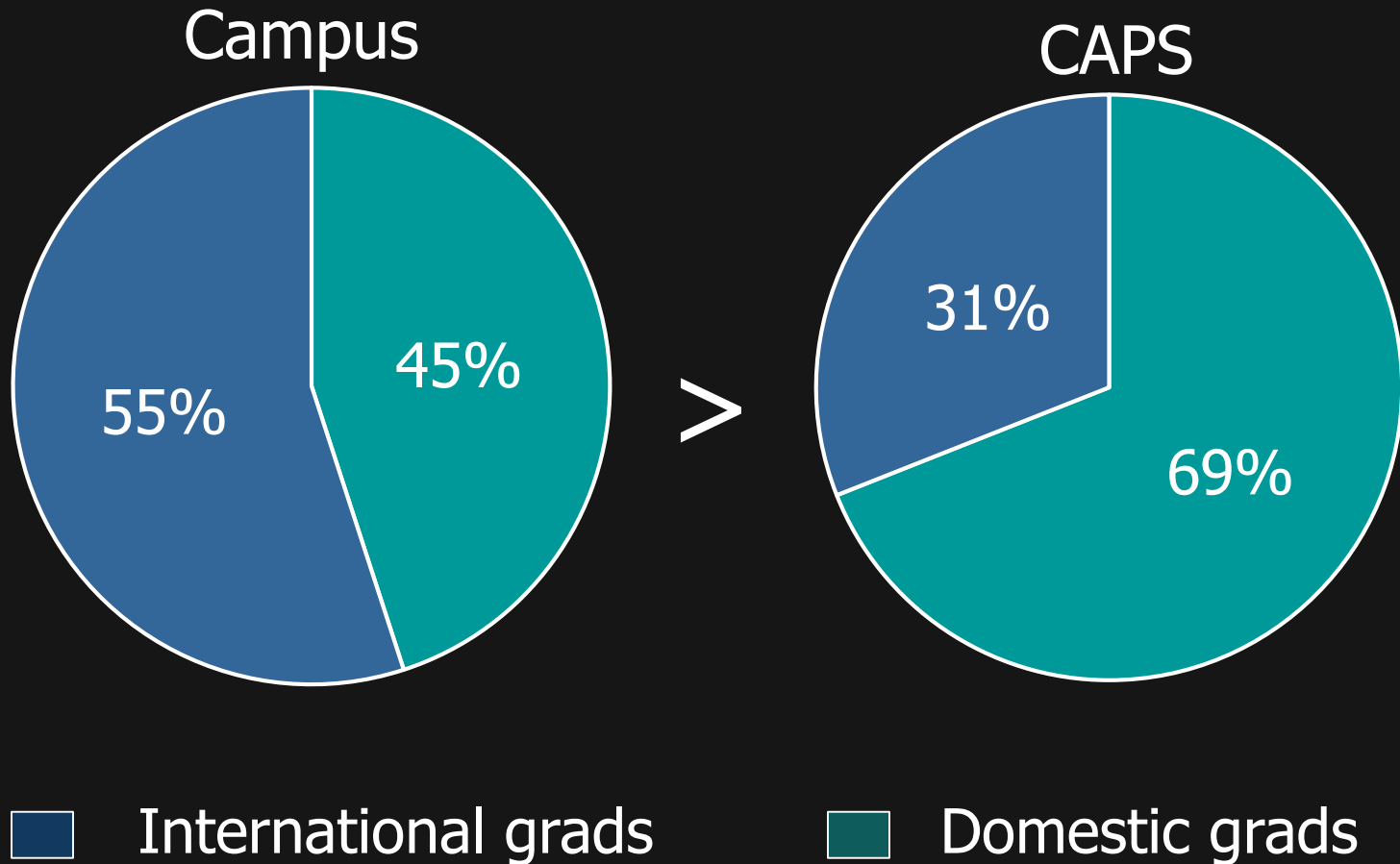


Conduct /
misconduct

Social relationships

Relationship w/ authorities

Graduate Students Seeking CAPS 2017-18



Values & Norms Affecting Help-Seeking Behavior

- Prefer using non-Western methods
- Stigma - cultural rejection of “mental health” or psychotherapy
- Value: Endures distress, and puts others’ needs first
 - Group identity stronger than individual identity → low focus on individual problems
 - Unwilling to share personal problems with others - to avoid burdening them

Values & Norms Affecting Help-Seeking Behavior

- Value: Self-control + stigma on emotional expression
 - Psychological assistance = immaturity and weakness
- Value: “forbearance coping” = conceal problems to maintain social harmony
 - Talking about problems with someone outside of family is shameful and embarrassing
 - “Losing face”

#5 Student Before Task

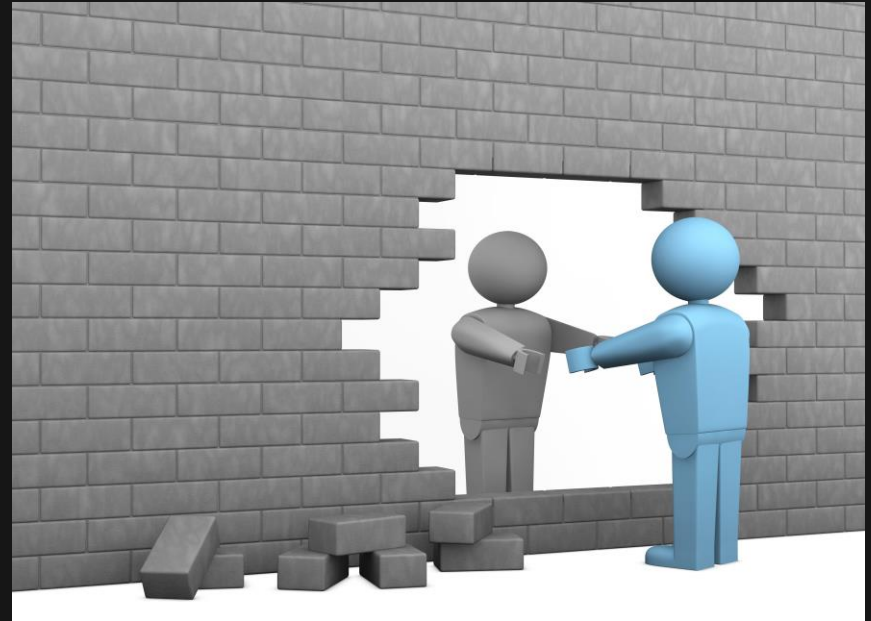
When Intervening

- Reinforce help seeking behavior
- Work with empathy, normalize experiences
- Ask about cultural practices, assumptions and norms
- Respect student's beliefs and values
- Educate about American norms and practices
- Work on increasing social support
- Refer to campus resources & encourage utilizing them
- Celebrate their successes

Removing Barriers

1. Intervene in group settings
2. Develop relationships with international student organizations
3. Host together with the student organization and include co-facilitators from the organization
4. Advertise through international students' social media

- #1 Welcome the stranger
- #2 See the richness behind the limitations
- #3 Give, one step at a time
- #4 Honor the differences
- #5 Student before task



Enjoy the diversity!!!!!!!

